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INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED
FOLLOW-UP AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES
AND SUMMITS

Outcome of the World Food Summit, including action to be taken to follow up the outcome at all appropriate levels

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 50/109 of 20 December 1995 and 51/171 of 16 December 1996, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council the report of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the outcome of the World Food Summit, which was held in Rome from 13 to 17 November 1996.

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ANNEX

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Report of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the outcome of the World Food Summit, held in Rome from 13 to 17 November 1996

1. In Resolution 51/171 on Food and Sustainable Agricultural Development, adopted on 16 December 1996, the General Assembly welcomed the outcome of the World Food Summit, held in Rome from 13 to 17 November 1996, urged all members of the international community to cooperate actively in the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the Summit, and reiterated its invitation to the Director-General of FAO to submit to the General Assembly, at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, "a report on the outcome of the World Food Summit, including actions to be taken to follow up the outcome of the Summit at all appropriate levels."

2. The Director-General of FAO is honoured to submit the present report in response to the Assembly's invitation, and takes the opportunity to express his gratitude to the General Assembly for its support to the preparations for and outcome of the World Food Summit.

Background

3. The World Food Summit was convened in Rome from 13 to 17 November at the level of Heads of State and Government. The objective of the Summit was to renew global commitment at the highest political level to the task of eliminating hunger and malnutrition and to the achievement of sustainable food security for all people.

4. FAO called the Summit in response to widespread undernutrition and growing concern about the capacity of agriculture to meet future food needs. At the 27th Session of the FAO Conference in November 1993, Member Nations expressed "deep concern" at the present situation and the future prospects, and stressed that "the world's major problems in food, nutrition and sustainability require immediate action at national and international levels".

5. After consultations with a large number of Heads of State and Government from all regions of the world, the FAO Director-General invited the FAO Conference to consider convening a World Food Summit in Rome in November 1996. The proposal, which was approved by the Conference at its 28th Session in October 1995, was subsequently endorsed unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1995. Throughout the period preceding the Summit, growing support for the Summit was expressed during discussions at the 106th, 107th and 108th Sessions of the FAO Council and at the FAO Regional Conferences; resolutions and recommendations in support of the Summit were also adopted at numerous other intergovernmental meetings.

Preparation of the Summit Documents

6. Preparation for the Summit involved broad-based consultations among governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, and the private sector.

7. In its Resolution 95/2 adopted at its 28th Session, the FAO Conference entrusted the role of focal point for World Food Summit preparation to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which is open not only to members of FAO, but also to all members of the United Nations who have expressed interest in participating in the work of the Committee. Through a special Inter-sessional Working Group of the CFS, substantial progress was made in preparing a draft for the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action.

8. Discussions at the FAO Regional Conferences provided a major input into the preparation of the Summit documents. These included the 23rd FAO Regional Conference for the Near East, Rabat, Morocco, 26-30 March 1996; the 19th FAO Regional Conference for Africa, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16-20 April 1996; the 20th FAO Regional Conference for Europe, Tel Aviv, Israel, 29 April-3 May 1996; the 23rd FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, Apia, Samoa, 14-18 May 1996; and the 24th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, Asunción, Paraguay, 2-6 July 1996; as well as a Regional Consultation for North America organized by the United States of America and Canada. Each Regional Conference elaborated a contribution to the drafting of the World Food Summit documents, on the basis of a document on the food security situation and issues in the region, together with progress reports on the work of the Inter-Sessional Working Group of the CFS.

9. In addition to this statutory process, numerous other fora contributed to raising awareness and formulating viewpoints and proposals to address the Summit's objectives, starting with the Global Assembly on Food Security, an International Symposium organised by the Federal Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec in October 1995 in Quebec and the Ministerial Meeting on World Food Security convened in Quebec on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of FAO.

10. Countries and organisations were encouraged to use other meetings already scheduled to discuss specific aspects of food security. National position papers on food security were elaborated by a large number of countries as part of their own preparations for the Summit debate. NGOs and the private sector, in addition to participating in national-level activities and in consultations organised by FAO prior to each Regional Conference and the 22nd session of the Committee on World Food Security, also held their own meetings to discuss the Summit. Several important NGO Declarations for the World Food Summit were submitted to the Summit Secretariat. Parallel to the Summit proper, an NGO Forum for the World Food Summit was held in Rome from 11 to 17 November 1996.

11. Taking all inputs into account, the negotiation of the documents was completed during the 22nd Session of the CFS meeting from 27 to 30 September, 8-9 October and 28-31 October 1996. The texts for the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action were thus approved two weeks

in advance of the Summit for consideration by the Heads of State and Government or their representatives. The Committee also endorsed arrangements for the organization of work for the World Food Summit and invited the Chairman of the CFS to present to the Summit the texts of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action for adoption.

Technical Background Documents

12. Fourteen technical background documents plus a technical atlas formed the analytical underpinning for the political decisions and actions approved at the Summit. These were prepared by FAO secretariat staff, often in collaboration with other UN agencies, and with other intergovernmental organisations, academic institutions, NGOs and civil society at large. The documents were distributed in provisional form, starting in early 1995, and comments were invited and received through an extensive review process involving experts from governments, sister UN agencies, development banks, selected centres of excellence, NGOs, the private sector, and eminent persons, among others. In their revised final form, the background documents and the technical atlas were published by FAO in three volumes shortly before the Summit. The titles of the documents are shown in the Box.

Technical background documents prepared for the World Food Summit

1. Food, agriculture and food security: developments since the World Food Conference and prospects
2. Success stories in food security
3. Socio-political and economic environment for food security
4. Food requirements and population growth
5. Food security and nutrition
6. Lessons from the green revolution: towards a new green revolution
7. Food production: the critical role of water
8. Food for consumers: marketing, processing and distribution
9. Role of research in global food security and agricultural development
10. Investment in agriculture: evolution and prospects
11. Food production and environmental impact
12. Food and international trade
13. Food security and food assistance
14. Assessment of feasible progress in food security
15. Technical atlas

Involvement of UN System Organizations in the World Food Summit

13. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 50/109 of 20 December 1995 welcomed the decision of the FAO Conference to convene the World Food Summit and, inter alia, invited all relevant United Nations and other inter-governmental organizations to cooperate actively with FAO in preparing for the Summit.

14. Many organizations of the United Nations system participated in the development, refinement and negotiation of the draft Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action. Involvement occurred either through the meetings of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), its Inter-sessional Working Group, and the FAO Regional Conferences, or in the form of substantive comments on the documentation submitted to the Summit Secretariat. A number of organizations were particularly active, including IFAD, UNICEF, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, WFP, WHO, WMO and WTO. It will be recalled that the preparatory process was crafted in such a way as to be flexible, efficient and cost-effective. Emphasis was placed on keeping financial costs to a minimum and avoiding recourse to the creation of new negotiating mechanisms by making use of existing mechanisms, namely FAO Governing Bodies, their subsidiary bodies and other scheduled meetings.

15. In addition, informal consultations among UN system organizations were held at FAO Headquarters in conjunction with sessions of the Inter-sessional Working Group of CFS. A first session was held on 5 June 1996, a second on 1 August, and a third on 23 September. These consultations, attended by IAEA, IFAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, WMO and WTO, discussed ways in which UN system organizations could make a meaningful impact on the Summit's outcome, and contribute to the Summit follow-up.

16. UN system involvement also took the form of financial support, with the World Bank providing funds for preparatory activities and UNDP for national-level preparation and follow-up in the Africa region. UN Resident Coordinators assisted in the coordination of national-level preparations, information activities and resource mobilization at national level.

17. Many UN system organizations and bodies undertook additional Summit-related activities, or issued statements of support, including the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), the ACC Subcommittee on Nutrition and the ACC Subcommittee on Rural Development. UNFPA and FAO held an Expert Group meeting on Food Production and Population Growth in Rome to examine issues raised in the technical paper on population factors in food security.

18. The UN Non-governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) assisted in communicating news about the Summit and its preparatory process to NGOs, through feature stories and bulletins in its periodical, Go-Between.

19. At the Summit, twenty UN system organizations took the floor. The UN Secretary-General spoke at the Inaugural Ceremony, and in the following two days addresses were delivered by 11 Executive Heads, 4 Deputy Executive Heads and 4 senior officials of organizations participating in the ACC.

Outcome of the Summit

20. One hundred eighty-five countries and the European Community were accredited to the Summit. Heads of delegations included 41 Heads of State, 15 Vice Presidents, 41 Prime Ministers, 15 Vice Prime Ministers, and 74 other Heads of delegations. Some 450 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and 80 United Nations System (UN) and Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs) were represented.

21. The documents (the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action) were adopted by the 186 Heads of delegations attending the Summit at the opening of its proceedings, following the Inaugural Ceremony. Fifteen countries filed "reservations or interpretative statements" on specific aspects of the Rome Declaration and Plan of Action.

22. The World Food Summit was very successful in increasing public awareness of the extent of hunger and malnutrition world-wide, and of the causes and prospects. Most importantly, it resulted in strong political commitment necessary to promote effective strategies and activities to reach its targets of reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015 and eventually achieving food security for all and eradicating hunger in all countries.

Follow-up to the World Food Summit

23. The Rome Declaration sets forth seven commitments which lay the basis for achieving sustainable food security for all and the Plan of Action spells out the objectives and actions relevant for practical implementation of these seven commitments.

24. The Declaration and Plan of Action will be made available to the Assembly and the Council for their information.

25. Commitment Seven of the Plan of Action stresses that the main focus of action lies at the country level, where governments have the primary responsibility for creating an economic and political environment that assures the food security of their citizens, involving for this purpose all elements of civil society (para. 56 of the Plan of Action (PoA)). The importance of strong international cooperation in the effective implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action is also underlined. It is emphasized that this will require effective coordination and cooperation within the UN system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, taking into account the mandate of FAO and other relevant organizations (para. 57 of the PoA). The priority accorded to stimulating and supporting action at the country level is one of the fundamental principles underlying the arrangements for inter-agency cooperation in follow-up to the World Food Summit.

- **Inter-agency cooperation on the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action**

26. Commitment Seven assigns to the ACC a significant role in the Summit follow-up as specified in the following reference (para. 59(h) of the PoA) that governments:

> "Invite the ACC through its Chairman, the Secretary-General of the UN, to ensure appropriate inter-agency coordination in accordance with UNGA Resolution 50/227 and, when considering the Chair of any ACC mechanisms for inter-agency follow-up to the World Food Summit, to recognize, in the spirit of ECOSOC Resolution 1996/36, the major role of FAO in the field of food security, within its mandate."

27. Relevant UN system organizations are encouraged to initiate consultations, inter alia, within the framework of the ACC, on the further elaboration and definition of a food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system. FAO is expected to play a catalytic role in this effort, the results of which should be reported to ECOSOC through the ACC (para. 59(b) of the PoA).

28. The Secretary-General is also invited to request the ACC to report to ECOSOC in accordance with established procedures on the follow-up by UN agencies to the World Food Summit (para. 60(d) of the PoA).

29. After the Summit, a proposal for inter-agency coordination of Summit follow-up was made to ACC by FAO and IFAD with a view to ensuring maximum cost-effectiveness, country-level focus, flexibility and efficiency, avoiding institutional additionality at a time of shrinking budgets within and outside the UN system, respecting the FAO Conference and General Assembly resolutions which noted that the Summit should not call for new funding mechanisms nor new institutions, and adhering to the principles which had guided the streamlining of the ACC subsidiary machinery.

30. It should be stressed that from the conceptual to the operational stages of this exercise, the two organizations intend to have the closest cooperation with WFP and other concerned partners.

31. It is foreseen that consultation would be carried out through the establishment, within the Resident Coordinator system, of thematic group(s) with participation of national government and its external and internal partners, including NGOs, to support national action. This is in line with the spirit of General Assembly resolution 50/120 which "requested the Secretary-General to make the Resident Coordinator system more participatory in its functioning at the field level by, inter alia, making greater use of thematic groups and adopting a more consultative approach" (para. 36 of resolution 50/120). Furthermore, this mechanism would facilitate enhanced inter-agency coordination at the field level as implied in para. 4 of General Assembly resolution 51/171.

32. The objective at the field level is to build "ground-up" and not "headquarters-down" mechanisms which would (i) facilitate or catalyze a participatory process for the setting of priorities and designing of programmes

and projects, and (ii) use effectively the complementarity of resources available to national agencies and UN system organizations.

33. The sharing of country-level experiences and the provision of headquarters backstopping support to the field level groups would derive from networking arrangements among relevant organizations, with FAO assuming responsibility for operation of the network. Extensive use of electronic communication, with periodic on-line posting of progress reports, is expected to reduce the need for formal meetings to a minimum. This flexible mechanism would also permit involvement of non-UN partners, in order to tap the broadest possible knowledge pool, without the institutional constraints imposed by formal inter-agency structures.

34. IFAD, as the former chair of the Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation of the ACC Subcommittee on Rural Development, would be the task manager inter alia for selective analysis and dissemination of country level experiences including best practices.

35. Full reporting to ACC through its subsidiary bodies, namely the Consultative Committee on Programmes and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) or the Inter-Agency Committee for Sustainable Development (IACSD), as appropriate, is foreseen in order to place the mechanism within the broader context of inter-agency coordination carried out by the ACC and its subsidiary machinery. This would help to ensure complementarity with other inter-agency initiatives and would also facilitate ACC reporting to ECOSOC.

36. At its First Regular Session of 1997, the ACC "endorsed the arrangements proposed for inter-agency follow-up to the World Food Summit....., which would focus especially on country-level action and coordinated headquarters support for that action." The ACC report further clarifies that:

> "Under these arrangements thematic groups covering food security and related issues would be constituted at country level, within the resident coordinator system. At headquarters level, FAO would assume responsibility for overall operation of a network of interested organizations, including also non-UN actors, to backstop these country-level groups and promote common approaches; IFAD will manage a monitoring and evaluation component inter alia to collect, analyze and disseminate selected country experiences. Reporting to ACC would occur, as appropriate, through CCPOQ or through IACSD. Its outputs could also be made available to other mechanisms within or outside the ACC machinery". (Report of the First Regular Session of the ACC in 1997)

- **Intergovernmental monitoring of implementation of the Plan of Action**

37. Under Objective 7.3 of Commitment Seven, the Summit called upon governments, in partnership with all actors of civil society, in coordination with relevant institutions and, in conformity with ECOSOC Resolution 1996/36 on the follow-up to the major international UN conferences and summits as appropriate, to establish, through the CFS, "a timetable, procedures and standardised reporting formats," ... for reporting "on national, sub-regional, and regional implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action"

(sub-para. a); to report to the CFS "on national, sub-regional and regional implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action..." (sub-para. c); and to monitor through the CFS "the national, sub-regional, regional and international implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action, using reports from national governments, reports on UN agency follow-up and inter-agency coordination, and information from other relevant institutions" (sub-para. e). Governments are also expected to provide regular reports on implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action through the CFS via the FAO Council to ECOSOC (sub-para. f).

38. At its Twenty-third Session, held in Rome from 14 to 18 April 1997, the CFS considered the question of Institutional Arrangements for Monitoring and Reporting on Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action, and was informed of action already taken by FAO and its partners. These included, in addition to the decision of the ACC as described above, a report made to the Commission on Human Rights in March 1997 on the outcome of the Summit with particular reference to Objective 7.4 relating to the right to food, and a report on the outcome of a technical consultation convened by FAO on the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS) with the participation of nine UN organizations, five national institutions and 15 experts from 11 countries.

39. The following extracts from the Committee's report on its discussions are included here for the information of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly:

> "... The Committee recalled that the World Food Summit had entrusted to it the critical role of monitoring the implementation of the Plan of Action and progress in reaching the minimum target of reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015. It noted that an important task at this Session was to ensure that effective arrangements are made to enable it to fulfil that critical role.
>
> The Committee reiterated that the primary responsibility in taking actions to implement the Plan rests with individual governments. A number of delegates reported the steps taken by their governments to develop national action plans to follow-up on the Summit commitments ...
>
> The Committee also underlined the importance of concerted action at sub-regional, regional and international levels to support national efforts for the earliest possible achievement of sustainable world food security. In this connection, the Committee appreciated the statements presented by the World Bank, International Food Policy Research Institute, International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the World Food Programme in the context of the follow-up to the World Food Summit, on their intentions with respect to food-security related actions in the areas of rural development, policy analysis, poverty alleviation and food assistance. The relevance of the Bank's new strategy for rural development, 'Rural Development: From Vision to Action' to the Summit objectives, and the new spirit of partnership between FAO and the Bank were particularly welcomed.

The Committee recalled that arrangements for monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Summit's Plan of Action should be based on three streams of reports - reports from national governments, reports on UN agency follow-up and inter-agency coordination, and reports from other relevant international institutions. It further agreed that in addition to arranging for the regular flow of reports from these three sources to the CFS, arrangements also had to be made for monitoring implementation at the subregional and regional levels. It noted with appreciation that the FAO Regional Conferences would have a standing item on follow-up to the Summit. It was stressed that all reports prepared by FAO for the CFS in connection with monitoring of World Food Summit follow-up should be made widely available, including through Internet. It encouraged members and observers to also make their reports available.

The Committee felt that the draft reporting format should reflect the structure of the World Food Summit Plan of Action in its entirety, covering the seven commitments. A number of delegates pointed out that the aim should be to provide baseline information on actions being taken to implement each of the seven commitments. A number of delegates pointed out that the focus of national reports should be on quality rather than on quantity and that there should be a right balance in qualitative and quantitative reporting. It was emphasized that the information to be provided should include some analysis on how national policies and actions are geared towards, and effective in, achieving the food security objective of reducing the number of undernourished. The Committee recommended that the reporting form should be simple and straightforward, should build upon existing information flows without duplication, and should allow a certain degree of flexibility to reflect specific country food security situations and circumstances.

The Committee agreed on a provisional reporting procedure to be used in 1997, based on the following proposal presented to it by the Bureau:

- the three reporting streams as mentioned in Para. 17 of Doc. CFS:97/5 will report on actions taken towards achieving the specific objectives under each of the Seven Commitments;

- the reporting should follow the structure of the Commitments and Objectives of the Plan of Action. Such reporting should cover actions, the actors and, where available, results, including quantitative assessments, under each of the Objectives. Where appropriate, this could also be done against individual Actions of the Plan of Action;

- the streams of reports should reach the Secretariat by the end of January 1998. They should cover the period up to end 1997.

At its 1998 Session, the CFS will consider a standard reporting format for successive periods. An open-ended working group of the CFS will be held immediately before the 1998 Session to examine proposals for this purpose, taking into account the experience of this first reporting cycle as well as progress with FIVIMS. The Secretariat will also provide

information on experiences with reporting mechanisms and formats in follow-up to other conferences and conventions. The Bureau would work closely with the Secretariat in taking these arrangements forward.

> As regards the timetable for submission of reports from 1998 and beyond from each reporting stream, some delegates felt the deadline should be extended to February or March. Some other delegates, stressing on the one hand the cost and effort required, and on the other, the time required for policies to have impact and for observing statistical trends, suggested that national reports should be submitted every two years. The Committee decided to consider these suggestions at its next session. (Report of the CFS, paras. 35 through 41)
>
> The Committee was informed of the outcome of the examination by ACC of the follow-up to the Summit. It was also informed that ACC had endorsed the arrangements proposed by FAO and IFAD, comprising thematic groups at country level within the framework of the Resident Coordinator system and an informal Headquarters and field-based network on rural development and food security, whereby flexible and cost-effective inter-agency information sharing and coordination would take place. The Committee requested that the relevant section of the report of the ACC's first regular session of 1997 be made available to the Council. ACC endorsement of this arrangement provided the basis for the two organizations to open consultations with other UN partners on detailed arrangements for establishing the mechanism and elaborating an initial workplan. Among the first tasks to be tackled would be arrangements for allocation and sharing of responsibilities for support to the implementation of the Plan of Action, taking into account also the follow-up processes to other international conferences." (Report of the CFS, para. 43)

Conclusion

40. With the decisions taken by the CFS and the ACC, the machinery has been set in motion to ensure early and sustained support from both inter-agency and inter-governmental bodies to national efforts to implement the World Food Summit Plan of Action. The arrangements agreed stress cooperation and coordination, and are rooted in recognition by all those involved of the need to achieve and maintain a streamlined process, avoiding duplication of effort and promoting efficiency and cost-effective use of human and financial resources while ensuring provision of the necessary information to the various fora charged with monitoring the actions of governments, their partners in civil society and those of international institutions, working in a coordinated manner to achieve the Summit objectives.

41. Heads of State and Government at the Summit have taken a common stand that the prevalence of hunger and malnutrition on its present scale in our world is intolerable and unacceptable. They have pledged their political will and their common and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries.

42. These common and individual commitments by world leaders no doubt represent a major step forward for advancing world food security. The challenge now is to see that the strategies and measures set out by the Summit in the Plan of Action are translated into practical actions, so that the number of the hungry and undernourished are progressively reduced in line with - or faster than - the goal agreed at the Summit.